

# Motions to Council

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Motion proposer:** Councillor Lynne Parsons

**Motion seconder:** tbc

**Topic:** Mental Health Initiative

The Labour Group would like to increase the impact of the existing mental health programme which was started by the Youth Activators in conjunction with the mental health charity MIND. It is proposed that this is achieved by making the programme longer and available through all schools, which we can achieve by partnering with the North Oxfordshire School Sports Partnership to identify schools where there were higher levels of need reported initially.

Providing a 12-week programme in 11 schools per term will result in all schools in the district benefitting within two years. The proposal would also target academic years 5 and 6 in primary and year 7, 10 and 11 in secondary as transition years.

The cost of the proposal is £0.035m per year and is proposed on an ongoing basis. Funding can be provided from the general contingency budget within Policy Contingency.

This council resolves to ask the Executive to increase spending on the mental health initiatives currently in place within the Chief Executive's directorate to be funded by an allocation from the Policy Contingency budget.

**Motion proposer: Councillor Eddie Reeves**

**Motion seconder: tbc**

**Topic: Spare Seats Scheme**

Oxfordshire County Council has not run its Spare Seats scheme for school bus places well in recent years. Parents and carers have too often been left in an unenviable position following changes, with consultation of Cherwell District Council too often lacking about changes affecting its wards and schools.

On 26 June, the Oxford Mail reported that:

*“Oxfordshire County Council is withdrawing its Spare Seats scheme for pupils travelling from Middle Barton and The Bartons villages to Chipping Norton School.*

*“It follows a furore last year when the council scrapped the scheme on nine routes, affecting more than 200 children including at Wheatley Park School, The Warriner in Bloxham and Wood Green in Witney.*

Parental choice remains an important principle of the current education settlement and will remain so unless changed by a new government. Whilst such a principle remains, it is important that local government works with maintained schools and academies to facilitate transport to families’ preferred schools at reasonable cost.

Given that County Hall’s most recent cancellations would appear to imperil this important principle, the Council requests that its Leader write to the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council setting out in clear terms that, in future, Cherwell District Council would expect to be more fully consulted upon all such changes affecting families across North Oxfordshire.

**Motion proposer: Councillor Eddie Reeves**

**Motion seconder: tbc**

**Topic: Consultation on Congestion Charge**

On 14 February, Oxfordshire County Council considered setting up a Congestion Commission as part of its last budget debate. Although this measure was not taken up at the time, this Council now considers that it is time for such commission to ensure that commuters into Oxford have a meaningful voice about how any policy changes planned in County Hall affect their working lives.

This Council further notes that the administration at Oxfordshire County Council has refused to rule out extending measures currently planned for Oxford to Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington, despite concerns from local businesses about the health of our high streets.

Such measures include Oxfordshire County Council's ambitious suite of traffic filters, workplace parking tax and Low-Traffic Neighbourhoods, none of which have been ruled out for Cherwell in future.

Were all such measures to go ahead, Oxfordshire motorists and working people could be hit by £57million in fines and charges over a five-year period as follows:

- Zero Emissions Zone: £25m;
- Workplace Parking Levy: £21m;
- Traffic Filters: £11m.

This Council requests that its Leader write to the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council requesting that Cherwell District Council be fully consulted before any plans are put in train or capital expenditure committed to introduce similarly restrictive measures across North Oxfordshire,, mindful of this Council's need to protect our high streets and local economy.

**Motion proposer: Councillor Eddie Reeves**

**Motion seconder: tbc**

**Topic: Member Briefings**

This Council notes that, by the time of its next elections in 2026, it will have been in No Overall Control for three years. Mindful that a new approach to local politics is required, this Council resolves to:

- i) Ask the Chief Executive to consider and ensure that ‘all member’ briefings on forthcoming policy matters of concern are offered as standard practice; and allow designated frontbench spokespeople from political groups to attend relevant Director briefings, for example, in connection with non-confidential items; and
- ii) Ask that the Constitution Review Group consider whether the formal designation of opposition spokespeople should now be enshrined in the Council’s constitution.